



# Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory

Cold Spring Harbor, New York 11724

January 14, 1991

Dr. Frank Press, President  
National Academy of Sciences  
2101 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20418

Dear Dr. Press:

For the past several years, many of us have made efforts to increase the participation of women scientists in the activities of the NAS and NRC. Unfortunately, we have had only very modest success. Many NRC committees contain only one woman; many have none. At Academy programs, the audience of professional men and women generally face a platform of men only. Nowhere in the NAS do we detect a serious concern for enlarging the participation of women scientists.

We believe that it is now time for you to initiate a bold new start to reverse this situation. Women are currently doing outstanding science and receiving academic and peer recognition for their achievements. For example, the recently completed Astronomy and Astrophysics Survey Committee consisted of 15 sub-discipline panels, each of about 20 to 30 astronomers. The median number of women on each panel was three; one panel had no women and one panel had seven. Yet of the 36 Academy "informal referees", none were female.

Serving on NAS and NRC committees offers experience and confers status on the participants; these are being denied women scientists. Additional participation on committees might enhance the likelihood that outstanding women will be elected to the Academy. Moreover, at present the Academy complex denies itself the contributions of a large number of talented and dedicated individuals. We look to you to initiate enthusiastic, positive, immediate action to improve the situation, which presently diminishes both the National Academy of Sciences and the scientific endeavor.

Sincerely yours,

Barbara McClintock  
Distinguished Service Member  
Carnegie Institute of Washington

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